

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5341

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: UCD PARTY ORGANIZATION TO BE SPURRED BY EARLY
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

REF: MADRID 4902

1. THE ELECTION OF FERNANDO ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA (A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT) AND ANTONIO FONTAN (A LIBERAL AS PRESIDENTS OF THE CONGRESS AND SENATE RESPECTIVELY COMPLETES THE ALLOCATION OF MAJOR POSTS AMONG FIGURES IN SUAREZ' UCD. A LONG LIST OF SUB-CABINET APPOINTMENTS HAS COME OUT (SEPTTEL) AND THE PROCESS OF FILLING GOVERNMENT JOBS CONTINUES (UNDER SOME PRESSURE, WE KNOW DIRECTLY, FROM PARTY FAITHFUL). THE VARIOUS SELECTIONS IN THE UCD PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS HAVE PROCEEDED AMID SOME GRUMBLING BY THOSE PASSED OVER, BUT, IN THE EVENT, WITH CLOSE TO UNANIMITY. ASIDE FROM THE DECISIONS ON CANDIDATES FOR CORTES POSTS, THE UCD ALSO ELECTED LEOPOLDO CALVO SOTELO, SUAREZ' AGENT IN THE FORMING OF CANDIDATE LISTS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN, AS HEAD OF ITS PARLIAMENTARY GROUP.

2. REGARDING ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY, HOWEVER,
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LITTLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID AND LESS DONE SINCE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED TO FORM A SINGLE PARTY (REFTEL). INEVITABLY, SUAREZ BECAME PRESIDENT OF IT, BUT FORMALLY THE DESIGNATION WAS ONLY TEMPORARY. CALVO SOTELO WAS REPORTEDLY CONSIDERED FOR THE POST OF SECRETARY GENERAL, BUT STILL-FRESH MEMORIES OF HIS ROLE IN IMPOSING SOME UCD CANDIDACIES AND VETOING

OTHERS APPARENTLY BARRED HIS WAY.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, JOSE LUIS ALVAREZ ALVAREZ, WHO FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CORE-GROUP PARTIDO POPULAR AND THE LATER, BROADER CENTRIST COALITION, EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE NEED FOR PARTY ORGANIZATION TO GET UNDER WAY IMMEDIATELY. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HE MIGHT GET THE UCD SECGEN SLOT OR BE MADRID'S NEXT MAYOR, HE COMMENTED THAT BEING MAYOR WOULD BE "PRETTIER" BUT THE PARTY TASK WAS MORE FUNDAMENTAL.

4. UNDERLYING HIS CONCERN, HE SAID, WAS THE FACT THAT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE TO BE CONVOKED BEFORE THE YEAR IS OUT. SUCH ELECTIONS WOULD REQUIRE THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF CANDIDATES AND THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT WERE IN MUCH BETTER SHAPE AT THE STREET AND NEIGHBORHOOD LEVELS. AS FOR THE UCD, HE SAID, IT HAD MANAGED TO DEVELOP SOME ORGANIZATION IN THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN, BUT HAD SUCCEEDED BETTER IN SOME AREAS THAN IN OTHERS. AN EFFECTIVE UCD EFFORT IN THE MUNICIPALS WAS IMPORTANT, HE FELIEVED, BECAUSE SPAIN WAS NOT ITALY OR FRANCE, WHERE PEOPLE HAD GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO BEING GOVERNED BY DIFFERENT SIDES ON DIFFERENT LEVELS.

5. WE NOTE THAT THE RELATIVELY EARLY ONSET OF THE
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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS DOES INDEED PUT PRESSURE ON THE UCD TO SHAPE UP. GOVERNMENT AND UCD FIGURES HAD TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT THEY FAVORED POSTPONING THE MUNICIPALS UNTIL INTO NEXT YEAR, OSTENSIBLY ON GROUNDS OF PUTTING OFF THE ATTENDANT EXPENSE AND GENERAL DISRUPTION, BUT THEY MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE THAT AN ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD HAVE DRAWN HEAVY CRITICISM AS BOTH UNDEMOCRATIC AND COWARDLY FROM PARTIES, ESPECIALLY THE PSOE, WHICH FIGURE TO IMPROVE THEIR SHOWING IN THOSE ELECTIONS. (IN FACT UNTIL THE ANNOUNCEMENT, CALLS FOR THE RESIGNATIONS OF THE CURRENT MAYORS WERE BEING HEARD THROUGHOUT SPAIN.) IN REACHING--OR AGREEING TO--A DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH EARLY MUNICIPALS, GOVERNMENT LEADERS MAY ALSO HAVE CONSIDERED THAT AN IMMINENT CHALLENGE WOULD HELP TO SPUR THE STILL-NEEDED UCD ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT. STABLER

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